ii. Waiver of overdue interest and overdue loans of weavers/PWCSs/Apex Societies as on 31st March, 2006.

The total financial implication of the financial package is estimated to be Rs. 1295 crores, which includes financial assistance required for weaver cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh.

The above proposals are under consideration of the Government.

Opposition to extension of visa to Ms. Tasleema

†*296. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some people are opposing extension of visa to Ms. Tasleema;

(b) whether she has asked for refuge;

(c) whether her novel 'Lajja' is the cause behind it;

(d) whether her health is a matter of concern; and

(e) whether some specific measures are being taken to keep her mentally fit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (e) Ms. Taslima Nasrin, an author of Bangladesh origin, is a citizen of Sweden, holding a Swedish passport. She came to India on 25.01.2006 and her visa for stay in India has been extended from time to time. The last extension of visa has been granted to her for six months upto 17.08.2008.

Ms. Nasrin has been a subject of controversy on account of her writings, including the novel "Lajja". Some organisations have, opposed the grant of extension of visa to Ms. Taslima Nasrin. Ms. Taslima Nasrin has been provided with appropriate medical treatment and facilities, as and when required.

Leakage of funds meant for rural development

*297. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that process of releasing funds for rural development is cumbersome, since first it goes to State capitals wherefrom it goes to district headquarters and in the process lots of leakages of funds do take place; and

(b) if so, the details of steps Governments is taking to plug the leakages?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. At present about 90% of funds under various programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development are released directly to District Rural Development Agencies, District Water and Sanitation Missions and to the State Rural Road Development Agencies (SRRDAs). The SRRDAs are autonomous bodies. As such there is no scope for delay or leakage of funds.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.